

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-15 SSC-01 /070 W
-----072255 061646Z /43

P 052130Z JUL 77

FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1033
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0248

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: PQ TO HAVE FIRST CABINET CHANGES

1. PRIME MINISTER LEVESQUE'S OFFICE YESTERDAY LEAKED TO PRESS THE NEWS

THAT FIRST CABINET CHANGES IN GOQ SINCE PQ CAME TO POWER WILL BE ANNOUNCED BY PM AFTER REGULAR CABINET MEETING JULY 7.

TWO NEW MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE MARC JOHNSON AND JOCELYNE OUELLETTE. JOHNSON WILL TAKE OVER THE MINISTRY OF LABOR FROM JACQUES COUTURE WHO WILL RETAIN RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT IMMIGRATION PORTFOLIO. OUELLETTE WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC WORKS FROM LUCIEN LESSARD, WHO WILL RETAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT WITH ITS PRICKLY PROBLEMS.

2. COMMENT: COUTURE'S LOSS OF LABOR MINISTRY HAS BEEN EXPECTED FOR SOME TIME. A GENTLE, INEFFECTIVE SOUL, COUTURE HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN ABLE TO ASSERT HIS AUTHORITY OVER TOUGH TRADE UNIONISTS OR TO ESTABLISH A POSITION OF RESPECT WITH EMPLOYERS. MOREOVER, HE HAS BEEN BUMBLING WHEN FACING OPPOSITION CRITICS IN THE ASSEMBLY. JOHNSON, WHOSE STAR HAS BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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RISING SINCE HE LED A SUCCESSFUL FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN FOR THE PQ, IS THOUGHT TO HAVE A HAPPIER COMBINATION OF CHARM, INTELLECT, AND TOUGHNESS.

3. OUELLETTE'S ASSUMPTION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PORTFOLIO WILL ALLOW LESSARD, WHO WAS WEAK PERFORMER DURING RECENT TRUCKER'S DEMONSTRATIONS, TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO LARGE, PROBLEM-PRONE

TRANSPORT MINISTRY. OUELLETTE EARNED HER REPUTATION AS A HARD, EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNER BY WINNING THE HULL SEAT WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ASSUMED TO BE ONE OF THE SAFEST LIBERAL SEATS IN THE PROVINCE. SHE WAS A MEMBER OF THE LAST PQ EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND IS MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH MODERATE PARTY LEADERSHIP THAN THE ONLY OTHER WOMAN IN THE CABINET, LISE PAQUETTE. PRESENCE OF BOTH JOHNSON AND OUELLETTE IN CABINET WILL SWELL NUMBERS OF MODERATE FACTION WHICH IS ALREADY DOMINANT IN THE GOQ.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977QUEBEC00248
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770239-1039
Format: TEL
From: QUEBEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770791/aaaadbos.tel
Line Count: 71
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5b185171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1965695
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PQ TO HAVE FIRST CABINET CHANGES
TAGS: PINT, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5b185171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009